

# CHECK OUT

CCJP

July 2013

## Election 2013 – Policy Positions: Indigenous Issues

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> in a series of CCJP Check Outs on key Election Policy issues.



**“The indigenous population lags behind the rest of Australia’s population on nearly every major social indicator. Making up 2.5% of the Australian population, indigenous people are vastly over-represented when it comes to poverty, life expectancy, health problems, disability, psychological distress and unemployment, according to the ABS”**

### Labor Policy Positions:

**Labor** has committed itself to Closing the Gap, a national intergovernmental program meant to address the disadvantages that Indigenous Australians face. Under this program, the state and federal administrations aim to:

- Close the gap in life expectancy.
- Halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under 5 by 2018.
- Ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous 4 year olds in remote communities by 2013.
- Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children by 2018.
- Halve the gap for Indigenous students in year 12 (or equivalent) attainment rates by 2020.
- Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and other Australians by 2018.
- Labour has modified but continued the policies of the Liberal Government’s NT intervention through the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory bills.
- Penalties for alcohol possession on Aboriginal land will be increased, failure for children to attend school will be discouraged through a decrease in welfare payments, X-rated material will be banned in certain areas and customary law considerations can be excluded in sentencing and bail decisions.
- Labour is in favour of the official acknowledgement of Indigenous people in the Constitution.



## The Green Party Policy Positions:

Like Labor and the Coalition, the party seeks to obtain constitutional recognition of the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in pre-1788 Australia.

Furthermore, it aims to provide equal access to services such as health, education, training, housing, community infrastructure, employment support, and policing.

- Provide protection and respect for indigenous cultural rights.
- Prioritize programmes to improve indigenous health.
- Establish community initiatives to address issues of family violence, alcohol and substance abuse.
- Incorporate indigenous culture and language into the education system.
- Repeal the Stronger Futures legislation.
- Establish effective heritage protection laws and protection bodies.
- Ensure food security for indigenous populations in regional and remote areas.



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CATHOLICS IN COALITION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

### Sources:

(Crikey.com, Centre for Policy Development, The Labor Party, The Liberal Party & The Green Party's websites)

**N.B.:** In some cases the Parties have only set out principles not specific policies & strategies. However it is possible to see some clear differences in some of the approaches on the issues.

## Liberal Coalition Policy Positions:

The Coalition said it would “encourage Indigenous Australians to get ahead” by:

- Working with Indigenous communities to bring in a new suite of purposeful and innovative strategies.
- Eliminating red tape and streamline programmes to move away from the complex web of overlapping initiatives.
- Directing funding away from bureaucracies and overlapping and competing programmes towards local communities and real action.
- Working with families to ensure all Indigenous children attend school every day.
- Supporting the Australian Employment Covenant and its many supporting employers to create more opportunities for Indigenous Australians to get ahead and actively engage more Indigenous Australians in real jobs.
- Providing \$10 million to fund four trial sites to train 100 Indigenous people for guaranteed jobs, working with the Australian Employment Covenant and Generation One.
- Ending training for training's sake and implementing employment or work for the dole programmes.
- Tony Abbott will continue to spend a week a year in a remote community, to gain a better understanding of people's needs
- The party has also said it would retain former ALP national secretary Tim Gartrell as head of the group campaigning for constitutional recognition.

### More Information:

For more information on this and other issues visit [www.ccjpoz.org](http://www.ccjpoz.org)

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